Herne Hill United Church (formerly Herne Hill Congregational Church and Herne Hill United Reformed Church)

Active
United Reformed
Red Post Hill, SE24 9PW

Herne Hill United exterior

Herne Hill Congregational exterior and architect's drawing

Historical summary

In 1902 a Congregational group was meeting in the billiard room of Casina House while awaiting construction of a church hall. When the hall was built, construction began on Herne Hill Congregational Church, Red Post Hill, which was completed in

1904. It was designed by Alfred Conder, sat 450 people, was lit by electricity and had central heating. The design was Gothic decorated, with red brick and grey terracotta exterior and light tinted bricks for the interior. The nave was 76ft by 30ft, it had two side aisles, north and south transepts, a chancel and an organ chamber. It cost c. £8,500 and the debt took some years to pay off. The London Congregational Union donated £1,000 and Miss Keen of Streatham paid for the tower and spire but £3,000 was still owed in 1905. A summer fete was held annually in the church grounds.

In 1941, the bombed-out Loughborough Park Congregational Church joined Red Post Hill, with a temporary church hall being built to house them. Bombing during WW2 caused subsidence and the Red Post Hill church began to slide downhill. It was demolished in 1949. Only £2,300 war damage compensation was received as the church had received no direct hit. Services were held in the church hall until the new church was built in 1961 at a cost of £31,000, much of which was spent on pilings. The new church had underfloor electric heating. Again, as with the first church, there was an outstanding debt of £3,000.

In 1972 the Congregational Church merged with the Presbyterians to become the United Reformed and the Red Post Hill Congregational Church was renamed the Herne Hill United Reformed Church. In 1985 the Herne Hill United Reformed Church and the Herne Hill Methodists on Half Moon Lane merged as the Herne Hill United Church. They worship on both sites.

Sources: Southwark Local Studies.